

- (b) if so, what initiative has been taken, so far, in this regard;
- (c) whether any success has been achieved as a result thereof; and
- (d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) to (d) As a victim of cross border terrorism for many decades India has played an active role in drawing the international community's attention to the need to prioritise the fight against terrorism through enhanced cooperation. Over the years we have repeatedly pointed out that terrorism is a global phenomenon whose destructive reach and lethal potential has been enhanced by global networks of illicit trafficking in drug, money laundering and arms smuggling. The horrific terrorist attacks on September 11 have further underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated international approach to combat terrorism.

Against this background, India has initiated a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism aimed at plugging loopholes and gaps in the 12 sectoral conventions on terrorism. In the three rounds of discussions on this Convention in the UN a high degree of convergence on most aspects of the Convention has been achieved.

The need to combat terrorism is also taken up in all bilateral interactions and Joint Working Groups on Terrorism have been set up with key countries.

There is heightened awareness and enhanced cooperation amongst the international community for combating terrorism.

Different rates for issuing passports

1259. SHRI P. N. SIVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have fixed different rates for issuing passport ranging from Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 depending upon the time taken to issue it;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government propose to issue passports to the applicants within a stipulated period at normal charges;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):
(a) and (b) In recognition of the genuine need of some passport applicants for out of turn issue of passports, the Tatkaal Scheme has been implemented with effect from 1.1.2000. The Tatkaal Scheme is applicable only in cases of genuine urgency where either police verification is not required or where a passport can be issued on post police verification basis alongwith the submission of a verification certificate issued by an officer of the rank of Deputy Secretary and above to Government of India. Passports under this Scheme are issued on payment of an additional fee of Rs. 1500/- for a passport to be issued within ten days of receipt of application and Rs. 1000/- for a passport to be issued between 11 and 35 days of the receipt of application.

(c) to (e) It is the Government's endeavour to issue passports on payment of normal passport fee in 56 weeks provided a clear Police Verification Report has been received and the application is complete in all other respects and no-out of turn service is to be provided.

Foreign visits to get support on cross border terrorism

1260. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the countries visited by him and the Prime Minister during September-November, 2001 to get support/understanding on issue of cross border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir by the Pakistan supported terrorists; and

(b) the outcome of the discussion held with the leaders of those countries and their views in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):
(a) and (b) As part of Government's ongoing efforts to promote India's interests in the international community, Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister have undertaken several visits abroad during the months of September-November. These visits included visits to Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States. While the visits were used to promote India's bilateral relations with these countries, in view of the developments following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Pakistan's sponsorship of cross border terrorism in India figured prominently during these talks.

During the Prime Minister's visit to the Russian Federation both sides signed the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism, on 6th November